

## **2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Risk Behaviors of Methamphetamine Users vs. Non-Users Montana High School Students**

### **Facts About Methamphetamine**

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Methamphetamine is a central nervous system stimulant with a high potential abuse and dependence. A synthetic drug, methamphetamine is closely related chemically to amphetamine, but produces greater effects on the central nervous system. The drug's euphoric effects are similar to but longer lasting than those of cocaine.

Methamphetamine takes the form of a white, odorless, and bitter-tasting crystalline powder, readily soluble in water or alcohol. Street methamphetamine is referred to by many names including "meth," "speed," "zip," "go-fast," "cristy," "chalk," and "crank." Pure methamphetamine hydrochloride, the smokable form of the drug, is called "L.A." or - because of its clear, chunky crystals- "ice" "crystal," "glass," or "quartz."

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### **Methods and Effects of Use**

Methamphetamine can be smoked, injected intravenously, snorted, or ingested orally. The drug alters mood in different ways, depending on how it is taken. Immediately after smoking or intravenous injection, the user experiences an intense "rush" or "flash" that lasts only a few minutes and is described as extremely pleasurable. Smoking or injecting produces effects fastest, within 5 to 10 seconds. Snorting or ingesting orally produces euphoria - a high but not an intense rush. Snorting produces effects within 3 to 5 minutes, and ingesting orally produces effects within 15 to 20 minutes.

Even small amounts of methamphetamine can produce euphoria, enhanced wakefulness, increased physical activity, decreased appetite, and increased respiration. Other central nervous system effects include athetosis (writhing, jerky, or flailing movements), irritability, insomnia, confusion, tremors, anxiety, aggression, hyperthermia, and convulsions. Hyperthermia and convulsions sometimes can result in death.

Cardiovascular side effects include chest pain and hypertension and sometimes can result in cardiovascular collapse and death. In addition, methamphetamine causes increased heart rate and blood pressure and sometimes can cause irreversible damage to blood vessels in the brain, producing strokes. Methamphetamine abuse during pregnancy may result in prenatal complications, increased rates of premature delivery, and altered neonatal behavioral patterns.

Psychological symptoms of prolonged methamphetamine abuse can resemble those of schizophrenia and are characterized by paranoia, hallucinations, repetitive behavior patterns, and formication (delusions of parasites or insects on the skin). Methamphetamine-induced paranoia can result in homicidal or suicidal thoughts. Although no characteristic physical signs of withdrawal are associated with methamphetamine abuse, users report drug craving, depressed mood, sleepiness, and hunger.

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### **Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey**

The Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is administered by the Montana Office of Public Instruction every two years to students in grades 7 through 12. The purpose of the survey is to help monitor the prevalence of behaviors that not only influence youth health, but also put youth at risk for the most significant health and social problems that can occur during adolescence. While all schools in Montana can participate in the survey on a volunteer basis, approximately 50 high schools are randomly selected to be included to provide the Montana statewide data to be used in other national YRBS reports.

The 2009 YRBS was conducted in February of 2009. Schools administered the survey were provided with detailed written instructions on conducting a random survey in their schools. To encourage accurate responses to sensitive questions, a strict protocol was implemented to protect the privacy and confidentiality of all participating students. The questionnaire is designed without skip patterns to ensure survey completion by students in a similar period of time.

### **Survey Validity, Limitations and Results**

Data used in this report from the 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey are based on a random survey of Montana high school students. The weighted results contained in this report can be used to make inferences about the priority health-risk behaviors of all high school students in grades 9 through 12 in all schools in Montana. However, users should be careful in using the data since respondents in self-reported surveys may have a tendency to underreport behaviors that are socially undesirable, unhealthy, or illegal (alcohol consumption, drug use, seat belt nonuse, etc.) and overreport behaviors that are socially desirable (amount of exercise, etc.).

For the purpose of this report, youth are classified as having used methamphetamines responded "1 or more times" to the question "During your life, how many times have you used methamphetamines (also called speed, crystal, crank, or ice)?" Fifteen separate risk behaviors were queried for association with the methamphetamine use risk behavior. These risk behaviors are listed in bullet, table and graph form in the following report.

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- Montana youth who have used methamphetamines are more likely to have driven a car after drinking during the past 30 days. (45% of meth users vs. 13% of meth non-users)
- Montana youth who have used methamphetamines are more likely to have been hit, slapped or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend during the past 12 months. (37% of meth users vs. 9% of meth non-users)
- Montana youth who have used methamphetamines are more likely to have been physically forced to have sexual intercourse. (33% of meth users vs. 8% of meth non-users)
- Montana youth who have used methamphetamines are more likely to have attempted suicide during the past 12 months. (36% of meth users vs. 7% of meth non-users)
- Montana youth who have used methamphetamines are more likely to have ever tried cigarette smoking in their lifetime. (94% of meth users vs. 49% of meth non-users)
- Montana youth who have used methamphetamines are more likely to have smoked on one or more days during the past 30 days. (70% of meth users vs. 17% of meth non-users)
- Montana youth who have used methamphetamines are more likely to have used chewing tobacco or snuff during the past 30 days. (32% of meth users vs. 14% of meth non-users)
- Montana youth who have used methamphetamines are more likely to have ever had a drink of alcohol in their lifetime. (96% of meth users vs. 75% of meth non-users)
- Montana youth who have used methamphetamines are more likely to have had five or more drinks of alcohol within a couple of hours during the past 30 days. (67% of meth users vs. 29% of meth non-users)
- Montana youth who have used methamphetamines are more likely to have used marijuana in their lifetime. (93% of meth users vs. 41% of meth non-users)
- Montana youth who have used methamphetamines are more likely to have used inhalants in their lifetime. (63% of meth users vs. 12% of meth non-users)
- Montana youth who have used methamphetamines are more likely to have ever had sexual intercourse in their lifetime. (94% of meth users vs. 46% of meth non-users)
- Montana youth who have used methamphetamines are more likely to have had sexual intercourse with four or more people in their lifetime. (60% of meth users vs. 15% of meth non-users)
- Montana youth who have used methamphetamines are more likely to think of themselves as slightly or very overweight. (34% of meth users vs. 29% of meth non-users)
- Montana youth who have used methamphetamines are less likely to have been physically active for at least 60 minutes per day on five or more of the past 7 days. (33% of meth users vs. 47% of meth non-users)

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<b>Health Risk Behavior</b>	<b>Methamphetamine Users</b>	<b>Methamphetamine Non-Users</b>
Drove a car during the past 30 days when they had been drinking alcohol	44.7%	13.4%
Ever hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend during the past 12 months	37.1%	8.6%
Ever been physically forced to have sexual intercourse	32.9%	8.3%
Attempted suicide during the past 12 months	36.0%	6.7%
Ever tried cigarette smoking in their lifetime	94.1%	48.5%
Smoked on one or more days during the past 30 days	69.8%	17.4%
Used chewing tobacco or snuff during the past 30 days	31.6%	13.9%
Ever drank alcohol in their lifetime	95.9%	75.1%
Had five or more drinks of alcohol within a couple of hours during the past 30 days	67.0%	29.2%
Used marijuana in their lifetime	92.9%	41.0%
Used inhalants in their lifetime	62.7%	12.0%
Ever had sexual intercourse in their lifetime	94.4%	46.3%
Had sexual intercourse with four or more people in their lifetime	60.1%	14.9%
Think of themselves as slightly or very overweight	33.7%	29.1%
Physically active for at least 60 minutes/day on five or more of the past 7 days	33.0%	46.3%

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**Percentage of students by selected risk behavior**

